

County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES

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January 24, 2006

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Bryce Yokomizo, Director

SUBJECT: **DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES FOOD STAMP
OUTREACH CAMPAIGN**

In June 2004, in response to a UCLA Center for Health Policy Research report on hunger and food insecurity in Los Angeles County, your Board directed our Department to develop a collaborative campaign to increase Food Stamp utilization in the Antelope Valley and to use the experience from that campaign to develop a Countywide Food Stamp Outreach Plan.

In response to your Board's direction, we launched a campaign in the Antelope Valley which resulted in a 36% increase, from August 2004 to February 2005, in the number of households receiving Food Stamps only. On the basis of this very successful effort, we developed a Countywide Food Stamp Outreach Campaign which was implemented on July 25, 2005. This memo is to provide you with an update on the Campaign and our efforts to reduce food insecurity and hunger by increasing Food Stamp participation in Los Angeles County. The successful progress of this Countywide plan has resulted in a 13.0% increase in the Food Stamp Only caseload from June 2005 to November 2005. This plan includes the following elements:

- One Intake Eligibility Worker (EW) in each DPSS Food Stamp district office is dedicated to outreach efforts. This Outreach EW accepts and assists with Food Stamp applications at non-traditional sites, such as WIC offices, health clinics, food pantries, and schools. The Outreach EW also makes program presentations, distributes marketing materials and conducts pre-screening events.
- DPSS continues to outstation Food Stamp Intake Eligibility Workers at 11 Department of Community and Senior Services emergency food distribution sites, including Senior Centers. Outreach EWs continue to perform outreach and accept applications at these sites.
- Food Stamp outreach continues to be conducted with families and individuals receiving Medi-Cal, who do not receive Food Stamp benefits. Also, families and individuals applying for Medi-Cal continue to be encouraged to apply for Food Stamp benefits.

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective And Caring Service"

- Our Department has conducted a six-month pilot, completed on December 30 2005, to test the effectiveness of joint Medi-Cal/Food Stamp outreach workers. The pilot included the testing of two models. One used five Outreach EWs from a traditional district office. The other used five Outreach EWs from a Medi-Cal Outreach District. These EWs performed outreach, accepted and assisted with Food Stamp and Medi-Cal applications at non-traditional sites. They also provided valuable information about Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). We are currently in the process of evaluating the pilot.
- Additionally, on July 25, 2005, our Department implemented a Restaurant Meals Program. Homeless, elderly and disabled Food Stamp participants may now purchase prepared meals at restaurants authorized by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Currently, 144 restaurants are participating in the Program. In addition, we have signed MOUs with 49 others, providing a wide variety of healthy, nutritious, low-cost meals. These restaurants are currently in the USDA authorization process.

To maximize the effectiveness of this campaign, we have contracted a social marketing expert, funded by the Quality and Productivity Commission, to develop a media strategy and marketing materials that will reach our target population. We are meeting with him on a monthly basis to share ideas and discuss strategy. At our last meeting on November 7, 2005, we were provided with several designs of brochures, posters and flyers for our review. Our next meeting is scheduled for January 25, 2006, and we expect to finalize all materials at that time.

Our Department is also planning a Community-Based (CBO) and Faith-Based Organization (FBO) Food Stamp Application Pilot Project. This effort involves contracting with CBOs and FBOs, with the goal of assisting potentially eligible Food Stamp applicants in completing the application and providing it, with all required supporting documentation, to DPSS. Applications submitted to the Department that include all required supporting documentation and are approved for Food Stamps will result in a payment of forty (40) dollars from DPSS to the CBO/FBO. Payment will not be made for denied applications or those approved applications which require the Department to request further supporting documentation from applicants for eligibility determination. This pilot is scheduled for implementation by April of 2006.

Increasing Food Stamp participation among eligible households continues to be a priority for the Department, in partnership with a wide variety of community partners. I will continue to report to you on the progress of our Food Stamp Outreach efforts on a semi-annual basis.

BY:ms

c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors